





DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the records of the Department of the Interior.

Testimony of the
Witnesses

The undersigned, being duly sworn, depose and say that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the records of the Department of the Interior.

WITNESSED my hand and the seal of the Department of the Interior at Washington, D.C., this _____ day of _____, 19____.

PIONEERING IN KLONDIKE.—CONCLUSION.

BY ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

GAME.

ALASKA is a notable country for many kinds of game, but during recent years it has steadily decreased in the neighbourhood of the Yukon, owing of course to the ravages of big-game hunters in the main valley. Yet on the tributary rivers and mountain-streams game is still to be found in great abundance. Like all countries in high latitudes, the fur-bearing animals are a specially important feature in the fauna of this almost arctic region. The brown, black, grizzly, and silver-tip bears, and the long-haired lynx, are very much in evidence in the interior. Beavers are mainly found on the Hootalinqua, and there they are very numerous. The beautiful silver-grey fox has his home in the mountains, and the commoner varieties of the fox tribe are abundant near the coast. Grey and white wolves, musk-rats, wolverines, rabbits, marmots, and many others, combine to make the list of fur-bearing animals very complete.

Caribou and moose-deer are plentiful, and their skins are much used by the Indians in the manufacture of moccasins and snow-shoes. The grizzly and silver-tip bears are the most formidable animals met with, but, fortunately, these species are not numerous. The silver-tip,

so called from his having a white breast, is a semi-polar bear, and shares the ferocity of his more northern brothers. The brown bear makes his way to the mountains in early summer and fishes for salmon in the creeks, a sport at which he is a great adept. At that time of the year the Yukon Indians are engaged in the same occupation, for salmon-drying is an important industry with them; and if bear and Indian meet, the latter generally prefers to retire hurriedly, as the bear is very fierce and his skin is of no great value. This bear in his travels usually finds the best travelling grounds and the shallowest fords, and therefore his well-trodden paths become favourite roads with Yukon prospectors. The black bear is also good at fishing; but he is a permanent resident of the wooded and mountainous regions, and is by no means so much dreaded as his brown relative.

The Klondike river and its many branches were at first best known to miners as being infested with bears, and a general dislike for their society is said to have made prospecting up this river unpopular, otherwise Bonanza and Eldorado discoveries might have been made many years ago.

Although few birds are to

be seen during the winter, the brief summer season brings with it a great variety of the feathered tribes, which, by their brilliant plumage and cheerful melodies, serve to make the country appear almost like a tropical paradise. Ducks, geese, and other waterfowl are to be found in great numbers on the various inland lakes; and ptarmigan or snow-grouse, although winter birds, appear in summer also in gayer attire. In the winter their white plumage is scarcely noticeable against the snow, and in consequence they do not often help to swell the larder of the hungry miner. The bald and grey eagles are quite common near the coast, but they are rarely seen in the interior. Altogether, during the short summer, there are many species of birds in the Yukon valley that would de-

light the heart of an ornithologist. In winter almost the only birds to be seen are the snow-grouse, a crow of a peculiar kind, and a much-despised bird, about the size of the ordinary starling, that goes under the name of "camp-rober"; and it has the reputation of being able to eat anything and everything that is contained in a miner's outfit.

Fish, especially salmon, are very abundant in the rivers and lakes of the interior, and in no river to a greater extent than the Klondike, the very name of which is a mispronunciation of the Indian words "Thron-Diuck," meaning much fish. But both hunting and fishing are chiefly relegated to the Indians, as the miner generally has no time to waste on what he would term trivial sport.

HARD TIMES.

On Christmas Day we passed the Pelly river junction. We included Mac, Stewart, and myself, with our dog Dave. We had left the main party three days before, as their progress was much too slow to suit us, while at the same time they had commenced to quarrel among themselves, as I had half expected they would.

A large party cannot proceed far in a country such as Alaska without numerous petty grievances arising, and when this occurs it is always better, not to say safer, to separate into smaller parties. It was rather a grim incident that caused us

to break partnership, and one that I have never cared to say much about, but I shall relate it here, as it reveals the miseries and the half-crazed nature of the majority of the travellers on this long trail.

On the third day after leaving Dawson, when we were nearing the Stewart river, I and several of the most experienced miners were leading the trail some distance ahead of the main party. Mac and Stewart were close behind, as they preferred to keep a few hundred yards between themselves and the crowd. We were startled by suddenly hearing several

revolver shots, followed by a medley of curses and yells that would have done credit to a horde of Indians. When we looked back we saw no longer the orderly line of prospectors that we had led for nearly a hundred miles, but a surging mass of men crowding fiercely together and shouting with demoniacal fury.

"I'm afraid that means trouble, boys," said a grizzled veteran beside me, as we all gazed anxiously at the gesticulating mob behind. "Je—ru—sa—lem! look yonder; get your guns ready," he shouted, and with one accord we all—about a dozen—started at a run for the scene of the disturbance. "Mac, Stewart," I roared as we passed them, "leave your sleighs and come along." "D— them! —Philistines," growled Mac. "Come on Stewart"; and immediately after I heard them lumbering heavily behind me.

We arrived in time to prevent a poor half-starved specimen of humanity from becoming a victim to lynch law. He was accused of stealing a few pounds of flour, and for this he was to be hanged on a tree. In vain the older miners pleaded for him. "We'll have no darned thief in this crowd," was the inflexible reply, and the howls of the excited mob were redoubled. "Now, boys, this has got to stop," said the veteran, who was with me. "There will be no murder done if we can help it. Give the man over to us, and we will hand him to Major Walsh when we get to Big Salmon. If not," he continued suggestively, "thar's about a

score of us here, and we'll have a fight for it." The last argument prevailed, and the poor hungry thief was taken in charge by a dozen of the oldest miners. Mac and Stewart were much disgusted with the whole performance, and no more so than I was; and we were not sorry when we saw the large cavalcade divide and subdivide until at last it straggled in twos and threes over several miles. Then we struck ahead ourselves, and continued our journey far into the night.

When a fairly smooth stretch of ice appeared, we would start off at a run, and keep it up until the keen air, penetrating to our lungs, compelled us to stop. For a considerable time we went swinging over the trail at five miles an hour. The high shelving ice at the mouth of the Pelly gave us some trouble, but we clambered over the icy pyramids and again dashed forward at our best speed, determined not to be beaten by any obstacle. Although only six days out, we were now about 180 miles on our journey, and, I think, fully twenty miles ahead of the nearest party.

The temperature at this time averaged 40° below zero, and our faces were hung with icicles from morning till night. Our regular evening toilet performance consisted in thawing off these appendages.

There had not been a breath of wind for the last month, and all around hung a death-like stillness that was almost unbearable. We never saw a bird of any kind except one

large crowd, that followed us daily, circling over our camp at night, and breaking the silence with its hideous croak. Mac several times tried to shoot it, but, to his great annoyance, it always managed to escape. Daylight ceased about two o'clock, and we had to proceed on our journey by the aid of the stars alone: they, however, shone so brilliantly that we had ample light to distinguish the broad trail.

As we neared Daly river I recognised many familiar landmarks, although the ground was thickly covered with a heavy rime. Our progress now became much more difficult: the ice was in many places split asunder, showing the dry sandy river-bed, about 15 feet below, while the blown ice at the mouths of the various creeks was covered to over a foot in depth with hoar-frost, into which the sleighs sank over the runners. We floundered through this part of the route as best we could, in some places taking over an hour to accomplish a mile.

At this stage we noticed that our little store of provisions was going down with alarming

rapidity. "It seems to me," I said to Stewart as he was cooking damper, "that we are developing very healthy appetites." "There's nae doot about that," replied he, gazing solemnly at our little store; "an' if we dinna manage to get some mair grub, the appetites'll be a' that'll be left us vera sune."

Flour, rice, and coffee now constituted our food; any luxuries we formerly had had long ago disappeared, and now we had to be content with the bare necessities, and very small allowance at that. I had made a big mistake when I set aside our month's provisions for taking us out of the country. I had calculated the quantity of flour used formerly in a month, and had taken the same quantity with us; but I neglected to consider that while going to Klondike, and also for a time when there, we had had various extras which had considerably lessened our consumption of the staff of life, and now we had to satisfy our appetites almost entirely with flour, with the result that it was quickly getting reduced to very small bulk indeed.

BIG SALMON AGAIN.

Two days later we arrived at the Government camp on Big Salmon river, and immediately erected our tent near by. Major Walsh was as hospitable as before. "Come and pass the evening with us, boys," he said; "we haven't got anything special in the way of grub, but

I don't suppose you'll be very particular."

We willingly accepted the invitation, and that evening, while I talked with the Major, Stewart and Mac were engaged in earnest conversation with the cook of the establishment. "By the way," said the Major,

in the course of conversation, "I learn from some despatches that came up a few days ago from Tagish, that a large outfit, under an old prospector called Macintosh, is at present going over the Divide at Marsh Lake to prospect the Hootalinqua."

"I hope he doesn't tumble against any of my grounds in that quarter," I said, anxiously. I had discovered a valuable lode near the head-waters of the Hootalinqua some time previously, and as there was no Government office within several hundred miles of the location, I had not registered my find, never thinking that any one would prospect in the same direction. "The best thing for you to do," said Major Walsh, "is to go down the Hootalinqua instead of proceeding by White Horse, peg out your grounds afresh, then cross over and register at Tagish," all of which sounded easy enough, although I feared the perform-

ance would be a very different matter.

"That plan would suit all right if we weren't so confoundedly short of grub," I explained; "but, as it happens, we have only a fortnight's provisions left, and there's 300 miles of the worst part of the trail ahead." "That's all the more reason why you should go up the Hootalinqua," replied the Major; "it's a fine game country, and you will be able to add to your store with your rifles. Then, when you get to Tagish, Captain Strickland will do what he can for you."

After much consideration, I decided to take the Major's advice, but when I announced the change of plan that night to my companions, they were very far from being pleased. "Onyhoo," said Mac, as he hauled a small bag from inside his coat, "a got twa or three pounds o' floor when there was naeboddy lookin': it will help conseed-erably.

ON THE HOOTALINQUA TRAIL.

"Left wheel!" I shouted, as we arrived at the confluence of the Hootalinqua on the following day, and in a few minutes more I was striking a trail over the broad frozen surface of this large tributary, followed closely by Mac, Stewart, and Dave. We had made the journey from Big Salmon in five hours, and I was determined to proceed ten miles up the Hootalinqua before pitching camp. As we journeyed onwards I observed that the vast forests on the

river-banks were getting larger and denser, and that the country generally was taking on a much more fertile aspect. The temperature, which for the last few days had been about 40° below zero, now relaxed somewhat, and occasionally a few flakes of snow would fall, showing that we were gradually nearing the land influenced by the coast breezes. We succeeded in making twelve miles after reaching the Hootalinqua, being a total of about thirty

miles for the day's journey. It was, however, a forced march; at different places on the route we felt inclined to pitch our tent, but, knowing the state of our stores, we kept moving onward, trying to ignore the pangs of hunger. Mac's contribution was very acceptable, and I did not feel inclined to ask for details as to how he got the "two or three pounds o' floor." Stewart's sorrow at Mac's outdoing him in this respect was very great. "A'll wrestle the first Indian a see for a' he's got," he said grimly, but we had not seen any Indians for a considerable time. They had gone to their winter wigwams in the forests, and I feared that Stewart was not likely to have his desire gratified.

Next day we covered twenty-eight miles, and at that rate of progress I calculated we would arrive at my location in little more than another day.

I should explain here that when I prospected the headwaters of the Hootalinqua on a former expedition, I approached by way of Teslin Lake and Telegraph Creek: now I was travelling the entire length of the river to reach its source, and as yet I was in unfamiliar country. On the third day on the Hootalinqua trail our march was hindered considerably by the snowfall on the ice, the depth of which increased until it reached several inches.

It was evident that this was going to prove a serious difficulty, and I was already calculating on our chances of getting over the Divide in

safety. The country between Lake Marsh and the Hootalinqua is not by any means mountainous, the gradual rise not exceeding 500 feet. This gentle acclivity ends in a table-land, which slopes on the other side down to the Yukon Valley. There was no special point at which to commence this trail, and I had not thought that it would prove much of a difficulty; but in this, as will be seen, I was sadly mistaken. On the fourth day after leaving the Government encampment I began to find myself on familiar ground, and anticipated no difficulty in locating my previous discoveries. I felt almost disappointed to find no marks of human feet on the snow-covered trail. I had the idea that Macintosh, whom I knew by repute to be an enthusiastic prospector, would have by this time crossed the Divide, and had expected to see his "outfit" on the shores of the Hootalinqua. If this had been the case, I could quickly have repegged my grounds, and then without trouble have followed his tracks to Marsh Lake. I suspected Macintosh's courage had failed him when he most needed it. "Here we are now," I said, as we came to a small creek that wound its way through a deep gully before joining the main water on our left, and we changed our course, striking upwards towards the mountains: a few hundred yards in this direction brought us to several blazed trees, on the flat surface of which were various hieroglyphics, and—my own name. The direction of the

lead, its width and proved depth, were all carefully cut in deep letters into the boundary trees that did duty for the regulation pegs. The lode extended from the bank of the mountain creek to a point several yards distant; various leaders throughout its area showed clearly above the snow, and accurately indicated the direction of the main lead. It outcropped completely on the bank of the stream, and at this point the rich, free, milling quartz formation could be distinctly defined. I had intended to develop this mine at the earliest opportunity, but the Klondike boom had caused me to neglect it for one season at least; now, as I looked upon it again, I could not but contrast its aspect with that of the barren schist formations in the Klondike region. "We'll get the tent fixed first, boys," I said, "and then we'll set to work and make new boundaries;" so we selected a suitable spot among the timber for our tent and speedily got it erected, and in a few minutes more Mac and Stewart were busily engaged with their axes in squaring several trees that marked in a direct line the run of the lode. Not content with this alone, I asked Stewart to cut the date into one of the most prominent trees, and then I felt more satisfied. "A think it'll dae noo," said Mac, laying down his axe and looking round with complacency. "I think it will," I replied.

We dined early that day, and having still some daylight at our disposal, we went out in

search of game. We beat the forest, however, for an hour without success, but at the end of that time we had the doubtful luck of coming on a hungry lynx, evidently on the look-out for his supper. I was inclined to let it skulk off into the brushwood, but Dave, who was as hungry as the lynx, did not seem inclined to lose a chance of a good supper, and before we could interfere he and the lynx flew at each other, and in an instant were engaged in mortal combat. We were powerless to help our dog, as the two animals rolled over and over on the moss, presenting to our rifles a dual and ever-revolving target. The cruel claws of the cat-like creature tore great gashes in the body of the dog, but Dave cared not; he had a tenacious grip of the lynx's throat, and only muffled growls betrayed his pain. I fired several times, but, in my anxiety to spare Dave, the shots went wide, until at length, a good opportunity presenting itself, I sent a bullet through the lynx's neck and closed the fray. Dave had well earned his supper, and did not seem at all concerned about his wounds, which I bandaged temporarily till we should reach the tent. We continued our explorations in the forest till it was quite dark, but found nothing for our larder. Still it was some satisfaction to see Dave's tail wagging in jubilant anticipation of his supper. The lynx weighed about 40 lb., and Stewart took the trouble to dress the skin that it might be preserved as one more Alaskan souvenir.

Not being so tired that evening, I sketched out the location of the reef in my note-book, while my companions busied themselves in repairing our tattered wardrobe.

Very little is known of this locality, and perhaps a few words here relative to it may not be out of place. Around Teslin Lake, and for many miles down the Hootalinqua Valley, the country is rich in gold-bearing formations, and much alluvial gold is contained on the bars of the main river, which undoubtedly points to the existence of great mineral wealth in the smaller creeks. The district lies much lower than the Yukon Valley, and that circumstance, together with the fact that it is well enclosed by the several ranges of mountains, causes it to have a much milder climate than is generally experienced in the same latitude. Vegetation is also richer, and animal life more abundant than in the region of the Yukon. The "country" rock, like that farther north, is a slate and mica-schist formation, which is well exposed in the deep gorges that are common to all the streams, there being also evidence of the existence of coal in large quantities. The vast forests are alive with furry animals, which alone should make the country popular with hunters of big game.

The lynx grows to a huge size, and has fur full 3 inches long; and the long-haired grizzly bear is frequently met with. Travellers on the Hootalinqua should always be able to "shoot straight," and at fairly long range, as the silver-tip bear haunts this valley, and immediately he scents unpleasant company he invariably insists on making their acquaintance.

Until last year the Indians were almost the only frequenters of the valley, and they engage during the open season in hunting the moose-deer and catching beavers, as well as in their favourite occupation of salmon-fishing. The Hudson Bay Company had at one time an outpost in the neighbourhood, but it has long been deserted. Gold is the precious product with which we associate North-West Canada, but there is reason to believe that in the near future this special district will be found to hold still another source of mineral wealth. The strata comprising the beds of the creeks and various peculiar formations throughout the surrounding country are indicative of the presence of garnets and other precious stones. In consequence of these indications we named the creek bordering on the quartz reef "Garnet Gully," and I believe it will one day justify its name.

THE DANGERS OF THE "DIVIDE."

We made a fair collection of geological specimens in the course of the next forenoon, and packed them carefully on one of the sleighs beside our

gold-bags, and then with great reluctance resumed our journey, meaning to get a fair start over the "Divide" before dark. We soon got on to the Hootalinqua

trail, and quickly followed our old tracks back for a considerable distance before a suitable opportunity offered for beginning our westward route; and then we resolutely changed our course and struck a trail over the gently sloping hills of the Hootalingqua Divide. Before we had travelled a mile in our new direction I realised that we were going to have a tough time. The snow was becoming deeper and deeper as we ascended, and we floundered up to the knees at every step, until at length it got so bad that we made little or no progress. We struggled on until dark, however, and then dug a hole in the snow and lay down in our blankets. There was no timber in the vicinity, so we could have no fire; and while we shivered in our snow shelter we speculated as to whether we should die of cold or starvation. During the night the snow fell heavily, and as we had no protection against it, I got up and drew the folded tent over the mouth of our cavern; then we lay awake and listened to the pattering of the frozen flakes on our canvas roof. Strangely enough, I at last managed to fall asleep, and so for a time became oblivious to the many dangers surrounding us. I was awakened by the sound of Mac's voice. He was talking excitedly to Stewart, who evidently refused to awake. "What's the matter?" I asked, but before I could get an answer I discovered the cause of the disturbance. I had lifted my head slightly while speaking, and had come in contact with the bulging canvas,

weighted down by snow until it was only a few inches from our faces. "We'll need to get oot, or we'll be smothered," said Mac, shaking Stewart vigorously. The shaking not only aroused Stewart, but sent a shower of snow down from above. "Easy, Mac," I roared, as I felt the canvas beginning to press against my face. "What's wrang?" sleepily inquired Stewart, trying to sit up; but he very quickly found what was wrong, for immediately his head touched the canvas, the walls of our "snow dug-out" collapsed and we were instantly buried under a mass of snow, as the canvas with all its load came down on the top of us.

I felt almost suffocated, and made frantic efforts to throw off the heavy weight, but all to no purpose. In the meantime Mac had managed to struggle to his knees, and making a strenuous effort, he raised the weighted canvas on his shoulders and stood upright. In a few seconds more we had all scrambled out, and although it was too dark to see anything, I could hear Dave howling dismally at being so unceremoniously disturbed in his slumbers. The snow continued to fall in heavy blinding showers, and not a star could be seen in the sky. I struck a match, and by its fitful glimmer I could see an edge of our tent appearing above the snow where we had slept, but our sleighs were out of sight. "This is the devil's own country," solemnly spoke Mac, as he and Stewart stumbled forward to fish for the buried sleighs, which contained all our

treasures. I noticed with much alarm that the snow, which had already reached a depth of 4 feet, was rapidly getting deeper. How we were going to get along under such difficulties I could not imagine. Mac and Stewart quickly found and dragged out the sleighs from the snow, while I tried to light a piece of candle that I carried in my pocket in case of emergency.

"Get me my snow-shoes, Stewart," I said, and he unfastened my long Indian runners from one of the sleighs and slid them over in my direction. I slipped my moccasined feet into the leathern thongs and shuffled over to Mac and Stewart with the lighted candle, which I stuck on one of the sleighs. "I don't know how we are to get out of this, boys," I said, "but we'll need to do our best: we've got thirty-five miles to travel before we reach Marsh Lake, and I think we had better get ahead now." "Isn't it no' owre dark?" asked Mac, in hopeless tones. "What difference does that mak'?" said Stewart in answer. "We never see the sun at any time, an' daylight wadna help us to gang straiht without the compass." "That's quite right, Stewart," I said: "daylight on this part of the trail won't help us much." I harnessed Dave into his sleigh, as I could move about on my snow-shoes with freedom, whereas Mac and Stewart had to walk on hands and knees, so as to divide their weight over the soft snow, and keep them from sinking. "Now, boys," I said, when all was ready, "fol-

low me; I'll pack the trail as hard as I can with my snow-shoes, and if you keep on my tracks you won't go down." Slowly I moved forward, followed by Mac, Stewart and Dave stepping gingerly behind. It was necessary to place Dave last, as he broke the trail a good deal, and I could hear him whining feebly as now and then he sank in the powdery snow. I led onwards steadily, making a course for the end of Marsh Lake. My snow-shoes slid along very easily, sometimes too easily for those coming behind on their moccasins, and I had continually to be slowing my progress so as not to get too far ahead. We were now travelling across a fairly flat surface, and I had several times to consult my compass and correct our course, as we persisted in bearing away in a northerly direction.

The snowstorm increased in severity as we proceeded, but, despite its fury, we kept the same monotonous pace, bowing our heads to the blast. The darkness enveloped us completely, and I could not distinguish objects beyond a yard or so in front. As morning approached the storm abated somewhat, and when the grey dull light succeeded to murky darkness we could see a straggling forest some distance ahead. We quickened our pace, and soon lessened the space between us and it. I was glad to see timber of any description, as we could make a fire and cook our frugal fare before proceeding farther; but at the same time I hoped that the trees were not densely packed,

as they would then greatly interfere with our progress, and make steering all the more difficult. When we arrived at the edge of the forest I was relieved to see that the trees were very tall, and nearly all branchless. We thankfully drew up our sleighs, and started to build a fire at once. The snow was not so deep under the shelter of the timber, and we were not long in securing wood sufficient for all requirements. I sat down on the snow and carefully studied the Government chart, which had been so useful to us. I found we had yet full twenty miles to go before getting on to the Yukon river, but I also noticed that the lie of the land was downward all the way.

We had got over the worst part of the "Divide," having escaped dangers almost miraculously; but our efforts were beginning to tell upon us, and our faces were taking on a half-starved appearance. Mac's huge body was daily growing less, and his broad shoulders were becoming bent through over-exertion; while Stewart had become so thin and starved-looking that his own mother would not have recognised him. Still we had succeeded in all our plans, and had every reason to be pleased with ourselves, so we joked merrily over our coffee and damper, and tried to forget for the time that we were in a country full of hardships and dangers.

IN THE GRIP OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

We accomplished the remaining twenty miles of the dividing trail on the same day, and late in the evening we pitched our tent on the shores of Marsh Lake, almost on the same spot as we had camped upon so many months before. I could see no signs of Macintosh's party, but it was certain that he had not been able to cross the "Divide." I found, later, that after making some efforts to do so, he had sold his stores to the Government at Tagish and returned home in disgust. I was very much disappointed at not meeting him, as no doubt he would have given us a few days' provisions to help us out of the country: as a matter of fact, I had almost calculated on our meeting. As it was, we

found ourselves camped on the shores of Marsh Lake, almost 100 miles from the coast, with barely three days' provisions.

There's only one way to do it, boys," I said, "and that's to keep travelling night and day until we reach Dyea, and I hope we don't play out before then." We left our tent at this camp, and so lightened one sleigh of almost half its load. "We won't have much time to rest, anyhow," I explained; "and, when we do lie down, a hole in the snow will suit us well enough, as it has done before." The snow on the lake was over three feet deep, but its frost-crusted surface, packed into a hard mass under my snow-shoes, presented a very good trail to those behind. We found it

necessary to augment Dave's wardrobe by putting pads on his paws, which served the purpose of snow-shoes, and enabled him to pull his sleigh with greater ease than formerly. About midday the snow again began to fall, and the wind blew in great gusts, dashing the frozen powder against our faces with great violence. Late in the afternoon, when all was dark, we arrived at the Indian village on Tagish river. The wind had fallen, and the atmosphere had cleared considerably. "Hold on, boys," I said, at this point; "I wonder if we could barter with those Indians for something to eat." We considered a few minutes, and then approached the largest house and kicked energetically at the door: there was no response. We visited several smaller houses with a like result, and I came to the conclusion that the Indians had gone on a hunting expedition. We turned sadly away, and silently continued our journey. Before we had proceeded 100 yards a thought seemed to strike us all at the same time, and with one accord we stopped and looked back in the direction of the village. "Do you know what I'm thinking about, Stewart?" I said. "Fine that," he replied, "an' a dinna think that we've ony richt to starve when there's likely ony amount o' deer an' dried salmon inside thae hooses." "What do you say, Mac?" I asked. "A'm o' the same opeenion as Stewart," answered that individual, with a resigned sigh. "Well, if that's settled, we'd better get ahead some distance with our sleighs

and then come back," I said, "because if these Indians return while we are in possession, we'll have to clear out in a hurry." This uncomfortable suggestion was fully appreciated, so we moved on until we neared the Tagish custom-house, and then, leaving Mac and the dog in charge of the sleighs, with strict injunctions to move rapidly forward if he heard a gunshot, Stewart and myself retraced our steps, and in a few minutes were back at the Indian encampment. The first house we came to was considerably smaller than the rest, and its entrance was barricaded by several roughly hewn planks. Without wasting any time, Stewart, using all his strength, burst open the door and entered, while I waited at the door with cocked revolver in readiness for a surprise. I heard Stewart chuckling hugely inside, and forgetting our dangerous position, I struck a match and looked in. I saw several finely carved and beaded boxes 't in tiers, but there was nothing else. "I'm afraid there's nothing for us here," I said, as I surveyed the strange arrangement anxiously.

Stewart said nothing, but took down several boxes from their shelves and opened them. Nothing seemed to be enclosed but a blanket strongly scented with a favourite Indian aromatic. I could not understand why the blankets should be so treasured, and for the moment I forgot our object in entering the hut, and felt curious to know if the blankets contained anything specially interesting; so I unrolled one, and by the light

of a piece of candle I had in my pocket I carefully examined the contents. Nothing was to be seen but a few pieces of broken bones. I did not understand at once what this meant, but it suddenly dawned on me that we were in one of these peculiar tombs that the Indians of the north build as a last resting-place for their dead chiefs. Stewart was rather shocked when I whispered this to him, and would have made off on the instant, but I insisted on replacing everything as we had found it. I had a great respect for the manner in which the Alaskan Indians treasure their dead, and was very sorry to have committed so great a sacrilege; but the circumstances of our position were too severe to allow of our having a very keen remorse at the time, and I fear we were more disappointed than ashamed. The danger of starvation was for the moment the strongest incentive to action, and instead of giving up our quest, as perhaps we ought to have done, we approached the largest house in the village and tried to force the heavily-logged door inwards. "A doot a canna manage this ane," said Stewart, as he attacked the resisting structure again and again without success. "Try the window," I advised, as I lit a match to examine the barrier that so successfully resisted our efforts. My attention was at once drawn to a name carved in the centre of the door. It read, "King George II., Chief of Tagish Indians." "That's not so bad," I muttered; but as I turned away I noticed some scrawling letters below, drawn with charcoal.

"Stewart," I whispered, "have a look at this," and I pointed to the writing. "King George II. gone hunt caribou, come back night." "That looks lively," I said; "doesn't it?" Stewart groaned, and then fiercely attacked the barricaded window, and in a short time disappeared inside. I stood motionless for a few moments and listened intently for any sounds of the returning tribe, but all was still. A few seconds more and Stewart stuck his head out of the window. "I've got half a caribou here," he whispered. "Thank goodness, dump it out;" and in a very short space of time he stood beside me, having on his shoulders the hind quarters of what must have been a magnificent caribou. We silently congratulated ourselves on our good fortune, and were preparing to depart when we heard the sound of snow-shoes coming from the brushwood behind. I hastily extinguished the candle, which I still held, and, with Stewart following, rapidly made for Tagish river. "Let us listen a moment," I said as we got clear of the village. We stopped. Nothing was heard for an instant, but then a series of hideous yells echoed through the darkness. "Now we're in for it," grunted Stewart, and then I heard the sound of many snow-shoes all around. Conscience makes cowards of us all: we started off at a run, but the swishing sound of the snow-shoes followed quickly after us. The Indians had evidently guessed that we were straight ahead, and meant to overtake us.

"Can you get along a little faster?" I panted, as we sped through the darkness. "No; unless a drap this chunk o' caribou, an' that a'll no dae for a' the Indians in the district," was the response from Stewart, who was labouring much with his load. Gradually, however, the Indian yells became fainter in the distance, and we slackened speed to allow of a breathing-space; but the yelling horde, quickly coming up behind, soon compelled us to use all our energies if we hoped to escape their close acquaintance. I could not warn Mac as I had promised, as a revolver-shot would not only have given the In-

dians our whereabouts, but would also alarm the police station—a contingency to be avoided under the circumstances. By the time we had arrived at the point where Mac was waiting with the sleighs we had completely out-distanced our pursuers, but we could hear them plainly enough. Mac needed no explanation of our great haste: the sight of the venison was enough for him, so he prudently asked no questions, and without losing a moment we fell into line with our sleighs and continued our hurried march past the log cabins of the Canadian custom station, and into the dismal snowy plains of Tagish Lake.

A DESPERATE FIGHT.

A terrible blizzard was blowing as we passed over Lake Linderman and laboriously hauled our sleighs up the steep incline that led towards the Chilcoot. We had encountered many dangers and suffered much privation during the past few days; but now we were only a few miles distant from the summit, and the knowledge gave us courage. "We must get over to Sheep Camp to-day," I said, as we passed the timber-limit; "if not, we'll have to freeze as well as starve to-night." Our stores on this day totalled to barely a pound of coffee, we having used the last of our flour for breakfast. As we entered upon Long Lake the fury of the blizzard increased till the blinding snow became so thick and impenetrable as to cause utter dark-

ness. The snow, as we reached the higher altitudes, was very deep, and so soft that even my snow-shoes would barely sustain my weight, and Mac and Stewart, stumbling blindly behind in my tracks, occasionally sank to the necks in the chilly wreaths. I fervently prayed for light as we staggered on, but the darkness, if it were possible, seemed to increase, and the blizzard howled with redoubled force. It is impossible to exaggerate the awful nature of our struggles at this time: with death in its worst forms surrounding us, we strove with superhuman effort to reach the pass, but all without avail. We were now somewhere near that region of glaciers and ice-caves that had been so derisively named "Happy" Camp; but we were all exhausted, and

I saw that we could go no farther. "Only a little longer, boys," I continued saying; "hold out just a little longer, and we'll get under the lee of Happy Glacier." Nobly they responded, and wormed themselves along on hands and knees, as they dared not venture to stand upright lest they might sink in the snowy depths altogether. "Keep it up, boys," I shouted again, and as I spoke the icy caverns formed by the overhanging glaciers appeared out of the darkness close to my face.

Thankfully we stumbled into the welcome shelter, totally overcome with our exertions. At an altitude of 3500 feet in that northerly latitude the intensity of the cold may be imagined; but we could have no fire, so we lay down in our blankets—not to sleep, but in vain endeavour to get some warmth into our frozen bodies.

I had almost fallen into a lethargic slumber, when I was aroused by Dave howling piteously by my side. I stretched out my hand and caressed his great shaggy head; then remembering that he was still harnessed to the sleigh, I mechanically drew my sheath-knife to cut the traces. As I did so a new hope sprang up within me—I had not thought of the sleighs: they would burn and keep us from freezing, if not from starving. Certainly we had need of them yet, but their use as firewood was now by far the most important. I got up and quickly aroused Mac and Stewart. "We'll burn the sleighs, boys," I shouted. They got up with alacrity—like me,

they had not thought of that; but now they lost no time in putting the idea into effect, and in a few moments our sleighs, that had travelled over 1000 miles of snow and ice, were broken into small pieces.

A fire soon illumined our shelter, fed sparingly by Mac, who meant to make it last as long as possible. The blue ice above and behind us glittered and shone in resplendent hues, and gave our abode almost a cheerful appearance; but outside the blizzard raged in wild fury, and as we listened to the shrieking wind we shuddered and drew closer to our only comfort—the small fire. Stewart now bethought himself of our small quantity of coffee. "It's better than naething," he said, as he proceeded to boil a chunk of ice; and when the hot fluid was made ready we partook of it thankfully, then drearily sat around the fire waiting for the morn.

The night wore on, and as the storm showed no signs of abating, I feared greatly that we were after all to be victims of its fury; for we had decided to risk our fate with the elements rather than starve inactive. At six o'clock in the morning the last piece of wood was burned, and we shivered in darkness for two hours more, but still there were no signs of approaching dawn. "Now, boys," I said, "we'll have to prepare to face the storm: the summit is only three miles off, and there's a chance that we may get over all right; if not, we'll fare no worse than if we had remained here." We rolled our precious goods into

blankets, and tied them up ready for strapping to our backs, as we had no longer the sleighs to rely upon.

When all was ready I ventured out to test the trail with my snow-shoes, but immediately I faced the blizzard I was chilled to the bone by the blast, and had to stagger back to our retreat. "It's no use, boys," I said; "we're far too weak to face that storm." "There's some coffee yet," said Mac, sadly, "but there's nae fire-wood." "My boots might burn," I replied, hauling a pair of long gum boots from my pack. "But you'll need them when we get over," interposed Stewart. "Ah, well, I won't worry about that," I said; and so the boots were carefully cut into small pieces and a match applied. They burned up quickly—all too quickly for our comfort, as they barely thawed the ice. "We'll manage somehow," I said desperately, and I took a fur jacket from my pack and threw it on the dying embers. This was not sufficient: I kept up the blaze with furs, clothing—everything that would burn; and when at last the water boiled, my pack consisted of only two articles—the gold-bag and the sack containing the geological specimens. Everything inflammable had gone—in smoke—but the coffee was value for all.

Fortified by the hot fluid, and hampered by little or no weight, we made our way out into the blizzard, and, with our faces towards the Chilcoot, we struggled through the darkness, contesting every step with the

raging elements. Slowly, yet stubbornly, we progressed—one moment traversing a perilous drift hundreds of feet deep, and immediately after scaling the blast-blown slippery surface of some large glacier. Step by step we advanced. At ten o'clock the dim light of day was beginning to appear through the driving snow, but we had not yet accomplished a mile of our journey.

I made a trail, guided only by the sides of the gully which lead to Crater Lake, and against which we struck repeatedly. At length this gully terminated, and we forced our way across a flat snowy plain, which I guessed must be Crater Lake. Five hours of weary monotonous struggle brought us to a halt at the foot of the steep ascent that culminated in the "summit" of the Chilcoot Pass. At this point we were sheltered from the wind, but the snow fell thicker and faster, and totally obscured our vision, causing us to struggle erratically upwards to where the wind shrieked and howled as if voicing the despair of demons in torment. The nature of the blizzard on the summit baffles all description. Great clouds of snow and masses of glacier ice swept into our faces with terrible velocity, and compelled us to lie flat and writhe our way forward into the awful gloom of the Devil's Caldron, a small depression on the top of the summit. Here the storm seemed to come to a climax—the great depth of snow underneath us was disturbed almost, to its foundation. It hissed

and boiled, sending up great geysers of feathery foam and enveloping us in clouds so dense that we were almost smothered. The mountains at this moment seemed to quiver and then sway beneath us, while at the same time yawning chasms opened at our feet, into which we stumbled and floundered wildly, finally getting our heads to the surface by sheer effort of desperation. Then a mighty rumbling was heard above the howling storm, increasing quickly to a thunderous roar that continued for several seconds, and ended with a sound like the rush of many waters. Then the shriek of the blizzard was again heard, and the snow fell thickly as before.

We knew only too well what had occurred. The large glacier that overhung the summit directly in front of us had become dislodged, and had hurled its thousands of tons of ice into the valley far beneath. If we had been just a few yards nearer, we should certainly have been carried down with it.

When all sounds of the avalanche had died away we resumed our perilous journey, and inch by inch we wriggled forward until we reached the verge of the descent, which had now become an almost perpendicular declivity of perfectly smooth surface.

I took off my snow-shoes so as to leave my feet free to dig into the snow when necessary, and we all three sat down on the snow and half slid, half fell,

into the seemingly bottomless depths. Some five minutes after we picked ourselves out of an immense snow-wreath at the foot, and just then Dave, who had been very loath to trust himself to the dangerous ascent, came rolling and tumbling to our feet. He had not been able to keep on "even keel," as Stewart said, and as a result came down rotary fashion.

After our long and grim tussle with nature in her cruellest mood, we had reached the coast side of the summit in safety.

Late in the evening, when the miners congregated in the Mascotte saloon at Sheep Camp were holding high revel to the sound of an ancient piano, which was vamping accompaniment to the refrain of a popular song, bellowed by the whole assembly, we staggered into their midst, hungry, battered, and footsore, having accomplished 700 miles in twenty-eight days over the most difficult and dangerous trail in the world.

Only a few of the number that had started at the same time had succeeded in getting out before us; the majority were still struggling towards the pass through the land of perpetual blizzards, and later reports showed that many of them left their bones on the trail, while many others lie buried in the treacherous snow and deep crevasses on the summit of the Chilcoat Pass,